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Hon. Claiborne Pell
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

I am writing in connection with the current hearings on the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I have been occupied with many facets of chemical and biological defense as a member of the Defense Board, and have participated in several major studies over the past 25 years. In addition I have also been involved in many of the diplomatic and arms control initiatives which have sought to enhance our security by limiting the proliferation of these weapons.

In the net, I strongly endorse the Administration's support for this draft treaty, and urge your committee's approval of the ratification.

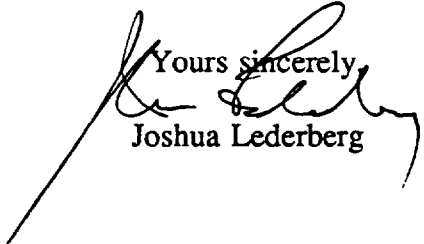
This is not to suggest that we can ignore many continued threats from the continued development and proliferation of these weapons. In fact, the recent uses of CW by Iraq in its war with Iran, and the very limited sanctions mobilized by the rest of the world at that time, have given a cast of efficacy and legitimacy to CW that must be countered by the most energetic legal and political steps, not to mention maintaining our defensive guard. I do urge that a failure to ratify will put us in a far more grievous position in our efforts to control CW.

I am particularly mindful of the arguments cited by Vil Mirzayanov in his editorial in the Wall Street Journal for May 25, 1994. I am an outspoken admirer of Mr. Mirzayanov, and played an active role in efforts like those of the New York Academy of Sciences (over which I preside) in crying out for his release from detention in Moscow. Shortly before the editorial appeared, I had lunch with him in Moscow to congratulate him for his courage in revealing transgressions against the intent of the treaty on the part of the Russian military. But he evidently does not understand that the U.S. has already abjured the use of CW; therefore the most reactionary clandestine elements of the Russian military have nothing to lose if we fail to ratify. They may even welcome that, as it will remove much of the external pressure that will be mounted against CW if the prohibition is institutionalized in international law.

There is ample provision within the verification and consultative framework of the treaty to deal with the technical issues raised by Mirzayanov, including the emergence of new chemical substances as potential CW agents.

So we must use all possible leverage to assure universal, including Russian, compliance with the prohibition of CW. Failure to ratify will have exactly the opposite effect. In particular, it will make it ever more difficult to sustain controls of CW technology proliferation to the rogue countries who are the most difficult to deter by other means, and the most likely to sustain CW programs in both formal military and clandestine mischief.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg